the ROHMER REVIEW

No. 11

Notes from the Editor

"Edited and published on an irregular schedule," it says on the Contents page. That has certainly turned out to be true. Much of the summer and fall of 1973 has been devoted to planning the Bouchercon mystery convention (see advertisement on page 8 of TRR # 10) and to cleaning up details and catching up on necessary correspondence after the convention was over. Readers interested in the essential balance of Good and Evil in the Universe may rest assured that the tardiness in the preparation of this issue of The *Rohmer Review* is being suitably punished: by the time it is ready for mailing, the new postal rates will be in effect. If that isn't punishment, I don't know what is!

One of the ancillary activities of the Bouchercon was the publication of a memorial volume of the mystery criticism of Anthony Boucher: MULTIPLYING VILLAINIES: *Selected Mystery Criticism 1942-2968* by Anthony Boucher; edited by R. E. Briney and Francis M. Nevins Jr.; foreword by Helen McCloy; limited numbered edition of 500 copies, of which 465 are offered for sale. The price is $7.50 per copy. The first couple of hundred copies will include a special pen-and-ink portrait of Boucher by the well-known fantasy artist Frank Kelly Freas. The book may be ordered from R. E. Briney, 4 Forest Avenue, Salem, Massachusetts 01970. Check or money order should be made out to "Bouchercon IV".

Other specialty publishers have been busy as well. From Luther Norris (3844 Watscka Avenue, Culver City, California 90230) there are three new chapbooks. BEYOND BAKER STREET is a collection of Sherlockian pastiches and diversions by Mary and Irving Jaffee, with illustrations by Roy Hunt ($4.00). WRITER OF THE PLAINS by Orrin A. Engen is a departure from the usual subject matter of the Norris chapbooks: a biography and bibliography of the famous and popular Western writer B. M. Bower, illustrated with photographs *($5.00)*. The 1974 PONTINE DOSSIER (volume 2, number 2 of this annual series) contains original material on Solar Pons and Sherlock Holmes by Dr. Frederick Shroyer, Penelope Wallace, Michael Avallone, Peter Blau, Vincent Starrett, and others ($4.00).

The Aspen Press (operated by Tom and Enid Schantz of The Aspen Bookhouse, Box 4119, Boulder, Colorado 80302) has published three chapbooks of interest to Sherlockians: SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE DROOD MYSTERY by Edmund Pearson, THE RESOURCES OF MYCROFT HOLMES by Charlton Andrews, and THE ADVENTURE OF THE MARKED MAN AND ONE OTHER by Stuart Palmer. All are edited and annotated by Tom Schantz, with fine illustrations by Enid. Unfortunately, all are out of

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Were and There

by SAX ROHMER

A radio message from a friend ashore, as I neared New York on my way back from Cuba a few weeks ago, gave me some hours of astonished guessing.

"No publicity when you land, for the love of Mike---will explain later," was the message.

When I landed I learnt the truth . . . which had nothing to do with bombs or threats from a real-life "Dr. Fu Manchu."

The U.S. authorities were claiming a big packet of money from me, as tax on royalties. My thoughtful friend knew I wanted to return to England, was afraid the authorities might take it into their heads to hold me till the matter was settled!

I had gone to Cuba from Haiti. When I landed at Port au Prince, capital of this strange, all-black republic, the first person I asked about was Somerset Maugham, because I heard he had arrived just ahead of me.

Maugham wanted to write a novel about Haiti, planned to stay several months. But he had gone. He had actually stayed two days, then made a dash for the first boat leaving the island. Haiti had got him down.

I don't blame him. For one thing, there is absolutely nothing to do in Haiti. And the natives detest visitors---keep up a weird, nerve-straining conspiracy of silence.

The American cruise ships don't let their passengers land for more than a few hours. There is voodoo---dread African magic---there...

Also the food is horrible---so bad that during my few weeks' stay I decided to live almost entirely on cheese. When I left, I was told I had finished up all the cheese in the island!

Haitians, they say, can make you die just by wishing. This "dying by will" business is not all imagination.

I remember a Lascar on an East-bound liner who fell into a hold and sprained his ankle.

It wasn't a bad sprain. But he just lay down and said quietly, "Me go dead." In three days, he was dead.

And the doctor declared positively that there was nothing whatever wrong with him except that sprain.

I got back to London to find my old friend Herman Finck was publishing his memories. Finck is about the last survival of the old group of Bohemians which included George R. Sims, first man to write "Mustard and Cress" in the old REFEREE.

I knew Sims slightly towards the end of his life and he was very nice about my early "Fu Manchu" stories in his column.

He had the best museum of crime relics in London next to the Black Museum at Scotland Yard. At one time, it was said, he had the brass plate of a doctor who had been hanged for murder fastened to his study door.

Herman Finck used to preside over the most informal "club" in London.

It was in his room at Drury Lane when he was musical director there. Any night you would find there a crowd of celebrities---theatrical, literary, all sorts.

If you knew Herman, you just let yourself in, and there was an amazing cupboard chock-full of every sort of drink you could imagine. You helped yourself, and if Herman wasn't there you called out "Come in!" to the next arrival.

In spite of "Fu Manchu," it is not the "green limelight" that attracts me most about the theatre. Somehow most of my friends of the stage are the funny men.

I had a secretary once---a young man who had just come out of the army---and a very serious-minded, efficient secretary he was.

His name was Teddy Knox---now **Nervo's** partner on the halls. I found him plenty to do, but maybe Teddy was wise to become a comedian instead!

One of my most treasured possessions is a beautifully bound, rare edition of the "Book of the Dead," the great text-book of ancient Egypt's occult lore.

It reached me by registered mail one day with a note: "Dear Sax, I picked this up for you while I was **prowling round Manchester." It came from George Robey.**

George of the eyebrows is a keen Egyptologist, as I am myself. It is a study that grips you oddly . . . I don't know about the alleged "curse" on people who open ancient Egyptian tombs.

But I **can vouch for the fact that there is a strange disease which affects many people who have played a part in excavating the tombs of old Egypt. I have seen four or five cases myself. One victim, an American woman, died. Another, who got over it, is living in London now.**

The Egyptians knew all about telepathy. We are only just beginning to understand it.

Perhaps it will be the next wonder after television---we shall be able to send and receive thought messages over long distances as we now send and receive wireless programmes.

And not only thought messages . . . We shall be able to send our "bodies," too. I know, because I have done it myself. It took me weeks of practice--- concentrating at the same time each day, memorising the exact "route" between my study and a friend hundreds of miles away.

Finally I **succeeded, "projected" myself by means of thought across the sundering miles. My distant friend knew nothing of the experiment. Yet he told me later that at that exact moment he had seen me, plainly, standing beside him. Given concentration, almost anyone can do this sort of thing.**

I always look up my friends in the police when I am in the States. It was in the office of an Irish police-captain in Chicago that I had my grimmest glimpse of American gangdom.

As I was waiting to see the captain, two men---their eyes slits, their faces tense---the perfect screen gunmen---lurched past me on their way out. A few paces behind them came two more men---collars up, hands deep in their pockets.

"Looked tough, didn't they?" said the captain when he came out. And he explained.

"The two guys in front belong to g a 's g . The gang has bumped off two of my best men inside a fortnight, but we can't pin it on them. So I've fixed it.

"Those guys are rounding on _____ The fellows behind are a couple of my boys. Those gangsters will lead them right there, and they've got their instructions. I've told them: 'Don't bring those birds in. *Come back and say it was in self-defence.*' Got that?"

I'd watched the start of a funeral procession.

Much pleasanter memory is that of my dear old friend Phillips Oppenheim, whom I found in Jamaica during my trip---sitting in the sunshine and drinking real Jamaica rum-punch. He was telling me that---largely owing to the American taxation push, I gathered--- he now lives in Guernsey instead of in his beloved South of France.

The most charming writer I know as host and man of the world, "oppy" still does everything there is to do---he's a first-rate dancer, for one thing.

Like so many of his heroes, he is a perfect gourmet. He can fix you up a superb little dinner, planned with genius, in any corner of the world.

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The preceding collection of anecdotes originally appeared in the "Mustard and Cress" column in the *Sunday Referee.* Date unknown, but probably sometime in 1938 or 1939.

Reprinted by permission of Mrs. Elizabeth Sax Rohmer.

Print (or will be by the time you read this). Any TRR reader who is interested in this type of material should write to The Aspen Press and request being placed on its mailing list, so that future volumes will not be missed.

In March 1973 Arlington House published the book SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT THE BIJOU by David Zinman ($12.95), which contains a chapter on the Fu Manchu movies. An excerpt of Fu Manchu material was published in *The Monster Times* #20, March 1973. The article has the inevitable small errors and omissions concerning Rohmer's life and works, but the book as a whole has received quite favorable reviews.

The May 1973 issue of *Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine* contained a reprint of Sax Rohmer's story "The Green Spider", billed as the first U.S. publication in spite of its prior appearance in issue #3 of *The Rohmer Review*. The story was part of Sam Moskowitz's series "Detectives by Gaslight". After publication of the story, it was discovered that both Sam's introductory material and the text of the story itself had been altered by the magazine editor. The change in the story is particularly unfortunate, involving the insertion of moralizing comments at the end, of which Rohmer himself would never have been guilty.

Fu Manchu has returned (sort of) in comic book form. Marvel Comics has, as of this writing, issued two numbers of its *Master of Kung Fu* comic, featuring one Shang-Chi, who is none other than the son of Fu Manchu. The stories are written by Steve Englehart and drawn by J'im Starlin. In spite of an attempt to remain faithful to the spirit of the original (belied by an event in episode #1 which is too horrendous even to mention), the emphasis on lengthy and grotesque fight scenes has the effect of pushing Fu Manchu firmly into the background, where I am sure he is quite content to remain.

JOHN BALL is the author of, at this writing, a baker's dozen of novels, including the Virgil Tibbs mystery series (*In the Heat of the Night, The Cool Cottontail, Johnny Get Your Gun,* and *Five Pieces of Jade*) and such best-sellers as ***Miss One Thousand Spring Blossoms*** and ***The First Team*** (currently being filmed). His book of travel and commentary on the Republic of China, ***Dragon Hotel***, contains many references to Sax Rohmer and Fu Manchu.

CAY VAN ASH, currently on the faculty of Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan, was a friend and protege of Sax Rohmer. With Elizabeth Sax Rohmer, he is author of ***Master of Villainy: A Biography of Sax Rohmer*** (Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972).

My Hero — Fu Manchu

by JOHN BALL

I grew up in the gray, cold, and depressing city of Milwaukee. Much of the architecture was turn-of-the-century and before: great massive accumulations of gray stone capped by steep roofs designed to shed the heavy winter snows. The house I lived in was venerable too, built sometime in the indeterminate past in the old Germanic style with oaken doors, stained glass windows, and an ugliness that seemed to seep into the rafters. Day after day I set out on foot to the local school, a building which, from its appearance, might have housed some medieval gestapo.

Much of the time it rained, and when it did the gray buildings became grayer still. The cloud of inertia which hung overhead on even the brightest days sank downtoinfuse every corner of that city which was destined to remain forever in the penumbra of bigger, brighter, and vastly more active Chicago. On Sunday morning the sound of bells could be heard from the Catholic Church many blocks away, a vast edifice that despite its noble purpose seemed even more depressing than the near-static area which it served.

But there was an escape. It was a secret shared, but still very private to each of us who held it. In the public library branch hardly more than a mile from where I lived there was a small row of books packed with the heady stuff that dreams are made of. Written by a personage himself mysterious and unseen, they flung open the gates to the Elysian Fields of imagination and gave wings to all of the hopes of high adventure in an unbelievably exotic world. The name "Sax Rohmer" became an incantation, to be repeated secretly at night in bed for the sake of the magic that the syllables themselves contained. No ordinary name could have conjured up such magic visions, no John Smith, Harold Stone, Ralph Brown, Arthur Ward, or William Jones---Sax Rohmer came from another mental planet, and he was the only guide to its mysteries.

Supreme among his creations was the incredible Chinese physician, Dr. Fu Manchu, whose name when it was repeated in the schoolyard was spoken only cautiously and when there was no one to overhear. His power was overwhelming and before him the vastly lesser figure of Sir Denis Nayland Smith stood like a student before his master. For Sie Denis usually escaped from the Chinese doctor by some happenchance not of his own devising, but when Fu Manchu wanted Sir Denis in attendance, the latter was brought, to be shackled time

after time and instructed by his mental superior.

From the first breath-catching time that I sat entranced as I read about Fu Manchu, I realized that here was a man for the ages. He did have some less agreeable characteristics, such as a tendency to incinerate his next-of-kin for lack of sufficient filial obedience, but such lapses were rare when compared with his multiple virtues.. Consider them! Begin with a magnificent intelligence and then add to it a comprehensive education worthy of the greatest names in the history of humanity: medical degrees from Heidelberg, Edinburgh and the Sorbonne, tremendous achievements in linguistics which made him master of every civilized tongue, and a research capacity that produced a series of unparalleled achievements in chemistry and related sciences. Add to these the stature of a statesman, for such he was (and is), with the mission of bringing to the Western world the vastly older Chinese civilization.

As a physician he had no peer. Were I lying ill and urgently in need of care, and were it given to me to summon to my bedside any physician of my choice, then it could only be one man---Dr. John H. Watson who, by his very presence, would bring the aura of immortality. But if I lay in desperate circumstances, given up for dead by the best men that were ordinarily available, and with the cold fingers of death reaching for my wrist, then sentiment would be cut away and the One Man summoned. From my bed of anguish and hopelessness I would look up into those bright green eyes and know that survival was to be mine. And if drastic surgery of an unproved kind was the only hope, then I would inhale the anaesthetic without fear if the scalpel were held in the long and delicate hands of Dr. Fu Manchu.

Like all adolescents I was subjected to many promises from my contemporaries, promises that at best merely evaporated and were forgotten and at the worst brought me loss and the pain of disappointment. When the latter occurres, as it so frequently did, I remembered again the Chinese genius whose word was inviolate. On a commitment of any kind from Fu Manchu I would have risked my life, knowing that I was doing so in absolute safety. That, more than anything else, made him my hero, for then as now I valued integrity--- and that, in Fu Manchu, is absolute.

For all his towering achievements, he was a man still engaged in the process of adding to his already vaulting education. Did he not once say, "My purpose was good, only my methods were wrong"? Only a man of greatness could have made such a statement.

In the schoolyard, on many an aching day, I looked at the well-bundled-up chubby little girls with their frequently runny noses and tried vainly to find in any one of them the slightest sign that she might someday mature into a woman worthy to wear the perfume of Kâramanèh. There were none. In later years I was to date several of these girls, and thoroughly enjoy doing so, but not even in a lingering good-night kiss could I find any part of the sublime magic of the girl who once served Fu Manchu and who was

released by him to marry that earnest man of Olympian good fortune, Dr. Petrie. To him was granted paradise on earth.

In Liberty magazine I found the enthralling account of SHE WHO SLEEPS and wondered if any mortal woman could claim the partnership of Sax Rohmer. And when at last I saw his picture, dressed in a long gown and smoking a pipe with the fixed determination of a Sherlock Holmes himself, I knew that my trust had not been in vain ---here was the giant who had been granted the sublime gifts to create an immortal.

Where are you now, Dr. Fu Manchu? So long as the magic elixir derived from orchids is at your disposal you stand immune to the passage of time. Are you in China, your beloved homeland, carrying on your penetrating research and opening new secrets of nature hidden for centuries from lesser men? Are you in some Western country in isolation, served as always by a faithful staff, waiting for the time to step once more onto the pages of living history? The only fault I find in you now is that you did not come to the bedside of Sax Rohmer when your great skills were needed, but it is possible that you did not know; few did.

Wherever you are, I hope that I may yet meet you face to face. I would like to sit at your feet and speak with you about Chinese civilization---something to which I have had a slight exposure during the past several years. Just give me your personal assurance that I will be permitted to return to my home and dear ones and there is no destination that I would shun to bring about a meeting. For I recognize that in you humanity has produced another Archimedes, another Newton, and (I almost said) another Fu Manchu.

I forgive you the Seven Gates, the terrible mushrooms in the cellar, and the other means you applied to your purpose. You yourself have abdicated them. Under existing constitutional limitations you cannot in legal fact become the President of the United States. For a while you nearly did serve in that office, but perhaps you are called to an even greater role. Live on, Fu Manchu, for the day will surely come when the world will at last realize the greatness of the giant who dwells amongst us.

A ROHMER MISCELLANY - I

The President's Fu Manchu

... the perennial serialists for *Collier's* were Sax Rohmer, with his Fu Manchu, and Arthur Somers Roche, specialist in the modern love story in what used to be called "high life." These writers, with unflagging invention, wrote millions of words for *Collier's* over a long series of years. Though there was an essential sameness in the production of each of them, their "fans" seem never to have been sated. And those fans---especially the "Fu Manchu" addicts---were sometimes found in surprising places. Chenery [William Ludlow Chenery, an editor of *Collier's* from 1925 to 1943] tells of calling on President Coolidge at the White House and being pleased to have him say that he had recently been reading *Collier's* with great attention; indeed, he had been sending a White House messenger out to a dealer on the avenue to get advance copies each week, The magazine was then running an important series by Shepherd [William G. Shepherd, *Collier's* feature writer and former war correspondent], and Chenery ventured to ask the President's opinion on those articles, only to find that all he was reading in the weekly was the current Sax Rohmer mystery; he just could not wait each week to learn whether the hero would foil Fu Manchu and how.

---A HISTORY OF AMERICAN MAGAZINES, 1885-1905 (volume IV) by Frank Luther Mott; The Belknap Press (Harvard University Press), 1957; page 471.

Portrait of an Author

Now sixty-three, [Sax Rohmer] looks less like his best known detective creation, Nayland Smith, and more like the picture of a retired Sherlock Holmes. Slim, wiry, he moves about briskly, conversing in clipped accents. His slightly saturnine countenance, punctuated by thin deep lines angling down from his nose, is more reminiscent of one accustomed to calculation, to gloved-hand methods, than of a chase over the rooftops. He has a tendency to frown slightly, but as in reflection rather than anger. A pipe grows out of a corner of his mouth.

---Stephen Winship, in the New York *Herald Tribune*, ? January 1947

A Discarded Penname

Elizabeth said that Sax had once considered calling himself "Ward Sars", but hastily dropped this when Clifford Seyler politely enquired how it was to be distinguished from "Ward's Arse" !

---Cay Van Ash (letter, 27 October 1973)

SH-H-H! DR. FU MANCHU IS ON THE AIR!

by W. O. G. Lofts and R. E. Briney

During the 1930s the pirate commercial radio programmes transmitted from the European continent had vast English audiences. By law, the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.) had a complete monopoly on radio transmission within Britain. Charged by its licence holders and by the British Parliament with the task of providing radio entertainment for all tastes, the B.B.C. broadcast numerous national and regional programmes of music, drama, lectures, and light entertainment. But inevitably the variety of offerings at any given time was limited. If one did not care for the current musical selection or the edifying lecture on bee-keeping, where could one turn for radio entertainment?

Commercial radio, banned in Britain and able to operate only from transmitters on the Continent, capitalized on this situation. With the financial backing of sponsors such as Colgate-Palmolive, Horlick's, Ponds, and other large firms, the pirate stations were able to attract quality writers and performers and provide showcases for their talents which the B.B.C. could not match. From the inception of their transmissions until they were closed down in the late 1930s, the pirate IBC stations in Luxembourg, Normandy, Lyons, and Toulouse offered a continuous flow of high-quality entertainment.

When, late in 1936, Radio Luxembourg decided to feature a series of mystery adventures built around a single character, what better choice could they have made than the Devil Doctor, Fu Manchu? In the 1930s in Britain, Fu Manchu was a household word. Best of all, this series---unlike the various dramatizations of Fu Manchu on American radio---would be written and supervised by the Master of Villainy himself: Sax Rohmer. The November 1936 issue of Radio *Pictorial*, which covered the commercial programmes, including the following blurb in its editorial column:

Brrrrr!

> Still running the rule over some of the December entertainments from the Continent, we come to the adventures of Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu. By December 27th the Programme, which starts Sunday the 6th, will no doubt have become favourite with listeners, and so after the Christmas festivals you can be thrilled in no small measure. Dr. Fu Manchu is being played by Frank Cochrane, and D. A. Clarke-Smith and Jack Lambert are other members of an excellent cast. Phillips Dental Magnesia sponsor these programmes.

The Dr. Fu Manchu series on Radio Luxembourg consisted of fifty-two 15-minute episodes, broadcast every Sunday at 7 P.M. from 6 December 1936 to 28 November 1937. Following the completion of the series, episodes #19 through #28 were repeated, lasting from 5 December 1937 until 6 February 1938, when transmission ended. Earlier, the first eleven episodes had been repeated in a different time-slot: Wednesdays at 4:45 P.M., from 21 July through 29 September 1937. The entire series of fifty-two episodes was also broadcast over Radio Lyons, Sundays at 10:15 P.M., from 7 March 1937 *to* 6 March 1938. Thus, for an eleven week period during the summer of 1937, listeners to the pirate radio stations could hear Dr. Fu Manchu three times a week---three different episodes, at three different times.

Radio Pictorial and other contemporary references contain no record of any Fu Manchu programmes on Radio Normandy or Radio Toulouse.

Concerning the pirate Fu Manchu broadcasts, Cay Van Ash has written [letter, 1 May 1973]:

"You mention that there is no record of broadcasts from Radio Normandy, and you may be right about this. But, if I remember correctly, this was the only IBC station which our antiquated radio set at home was capable of receiving.

"Sax himself wrote the scripts during the first half of the series. Thereafter, when the series continued beyond his original expectations, he found it too great an imposition on his time. He continued to write some of the scripts, but others were written either by Elizabeth or myself. I came in on only the last six months or so of the project. I had first met Sax in November 1935, and he had had my education in hand for just over a year. One thing I can remember very clearly is receiving one of his typically terse telegrams summoning me to Little Gatton, and my own astonishment when, on arriving there, I found myself invited to join in the Fu Manchu effort.

"In any event, whether draft scripts were written by Elizabeth or by me, they were carefully edited afterwards by Sax, for which reason I described the series in MAS TER OF VILLAINY as the 'most faithful' version broadcast. The adaptation was not a very difficult job. I don't recall that any particular selection of episodes was made. As I remember it, we just went straight through the books in their natural sequence. The dialogue did not require changing very much, because it was still quite acceptable in the 1930s, even though some of it might seem a little stilted today. On the other hand, we did our utmost to avoid narration and to translate action directly into dialogue or sound. This often required additional material, and I think we also used a great many more sound-effects than there were in the American 'Shadow of Fu Manchu' radio series.

"None of us had anything to do with the technical side of the business, and I have only a rather vague memory of the few remarks which Sax made about it. All the IBC recordings were done in London

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Sax Rohmer

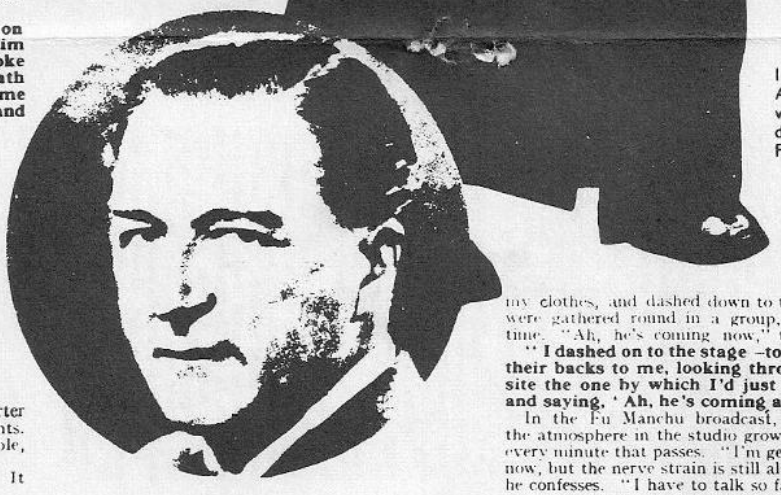
FU MANCHU SPEAKS...

... but Nayland Smith can take it!

By
SIDNEY PETTY

Week after week the sinister Fu Manchu pits his evil brains against the right and might of Detective Nayland Smith. Sax Rohmer's famous characters are brought to life each week on Luxembourg and Lyons by the makers of "Milk of Magnesia." This article introduces FRANK COCHRANE and D. A. CLARKE-SMITH, the two principal characters in these exciting programmes

Frank Cochrane as Fu Manchu has his back to the wall. Nayland Smith is on his track. Will Fu Manchu's diabolical brain get him out of the spot? Will it? You bet it will!



In circle is D. A. Clarke-Smith, who plays the detective to Frank Cochrane's villain

IN his oak-panelled room, in a house near Reigate that cost £45,000 to build, sits Sax Rohmer, weaving strange adventures out of a world of silence. Starting work at midnight he works on through the dark hours and into the sunlight.

And walking like restless ghosts through his mind is that Oriental arch-fiend, Fu Manchu, and one Nayland Smith, criminal investigator, engaged in the timeless war of wits that weekly thrills the millions. . . .

The scene changes, the gong sounds. . . .

And in the broadcasting studios, the figures come to life :—

Fu Manchu, in private life, is Frank Cochrane, one of the most talented players of Chinese parts that ever graced the stage. Years of experience—and memories grave and gay—lie behind him.

For five years Frank Cochrane played the role of cobbler in the sensational *Chu Chin Chow* show.

Funniest moment in the show, recalls Frank, was when "Nelly," the camel—an affectionate and perfectly trained animal who never misbehaved herself—one night walked on to the stage at a very sentimental moment, opened her mouth, and emitted the rudest noise a camel has ever been known to make!

Saddest moment was when Nelly ambled out of the stage door, and, just outside, fell through a thick glass paving into the room below. They had to go down into that room and shoot her. As her keeper levelled the gun she slowly raised her head and licked his hand . . . .

Oscar Asche, star of the show, went to his dressing-room and wept for a long time.

Realistic "burning" of a dead hero's body in the play *Beau Geste* brought down the house—"and the curtain," adds Frank (Fu Manchu) Cochrane.

On the night in question a new fireman was on duty. Smoke drifting into the wings brought him racing to the spot. He didn't realise the smoke was being discharged from cylinders underneath the stage, nor that the vicious tongues of flame were in reality billowing strands of red and yellow silk.

So he pressed the button, and down came the fire curtain!

Consternation amongst audience, players and staff!

In colourful language the fireman was informed that he had most definitely got the sack.

Then round dashed Basil Dean, the producer.

"Sack my foot," he yelled. "Why, it's the finest advert. I've had in my life!"

The audience were informed of the error, and the dead hero was "burned" once more amidst scenes of uproarious enthusiasm!

Real horror crept into another play, entitled *Spanish Main*, wherein Cochrane again played a Chinese rôle.

It was a cabin scene, at the end of Act I. Cochrane and a clever actor named Caley Porter were seated at a table down near the footlights. Porter had his arm stretched across the table, and a finger projecting.

As the act ended, the fire curtain was lowered. It took the end of Porter's finger clean off.

Cochrane grabbed it and stuck it back again.

"Am I hurting?" he asked, pressing the flesh.

"Pain," murmured Caley Porter, "is a darn good thing to endure, sometimes."

And that was the only comment he made on the accident, carrying on afterwards as though nothing had happened.

Sympathetic and highly sensitive, Cochrane closed his eyes as he told me this anecdote, as though he were re-living another man's pain. At which point it is interesting to recall some of the variety of deaths which, as "Fu Manchu," he has attempted to inflict upon "Nayland Smith." They include :—

Snake bites, scorpion bites, spider bites, poisoned flowers, poisoned gas, poisoned perfume, a poisoned ring, a blinding death-ray, car-smashes, aeroplane crashes, and placing the victim in a cage, divided into seven compartments progressively filled by starving rats (an old Chinese torture).

D. Clarke-Smith, famous quick-change character actor of stage and screen, is, of course, "Nayland Smith."

A man of ready wit, robust physique, with bright alert eyes, a sharp inquiring nose and a determined chin, Clarke-Smith fits in perfectly with one's mental conception of the sleuth "Nayland Smith."

He says he's played the part so long that he finds it difficult to realise he's not really a detective!

"You see," he explains, "I occasionally experience a definite 'hangover' after playing certain exciting rôles.

"As, for instance, when I take the part of a madman; prior to going on, I can laugh and joke; but, for some ten minutes after I come off-stage after a mad scene, I get this hangover."

In other words, the nervous reaction leaves him "all het up."

"After acting as a madman in *The Last Warning*," he reminisces, "I came off and found two very charming girls (Olive Sloane and Frances Carson) laughing in the wings. In my excited state of mind I thought they were laughing at me. To level things up, I went up to them and 'acted mad' for three minutes, then left them staring in open-mouthed amazement!"

Here's another nerve-racking moment from Clarke-Smith's theatrical memories :—

"I had three entrances in the first act, the first two in lounge suits, the third in evening dress. After the first scene I got into an argument with somebody, and we adjourned to my dressing-room to continue the conversation while I changed.

"The call-boy arrived late, and told me my entrance was overdue. I then discovered I'd forgotten Scene 2 and changed into evening dress for Scene 3.

"Hastily I pulled an overcoat over myself to cover my clothes, and dashed down to the stage. The cast were gathered round in a group, gagging to fill up time. "Ah, he's coming now," they kept saying.

"I dashed on to the stage—to find them all with their backs to me, looking through a door opposite the one by which I'd just entered, pointing, and saying, 'Ah, he's coming at last!'"

In the Fu Manchu broadcast, says Clarke-Smith, the atmosphere in the studio grows more intense with every minute that passes. "I'm getting hardened to it now, but the nerve strain is still almost unbelievable," he confesses. "I have to talk so fast, knowing all the time that one wrong word would spoil the show.

"Meanwhile, six or seven 'pro' men are grouped round another mike, to provide dramatic effects. And, when I'm supposed to be swimming for my life in a swirling river, I have to try to forget that at the other mike a man is vigorously shaking a half-filled hot-water bottle!"

Producer of these programmes is swift-thinking Eddie Pola, who rehearses three radio instalments in the space of two hours. "Funniest thing, rehearsing one most dramatic scene," says Eddie, "was when we came to the line, 'Shoot the man at the window.' Effects man fired the gun, but it just didn't go off. Again we repeated, 'Shoot the man at the window.' Again the gun refused to function. We tried again . .

"'SHOOT THE MAN AT THE WINDOW.'

"But still the gun was silent.

"'Oh, cut his throat,' I said. And at that point the gun went off and nearly blew me out of my skin!"

◆ ◆ ◆

The scene changes, the gong sounds. And in his oak-panelled room sits Sax Rohmer, weaving more strange adventures out of a world of silence.

Also a little limelight this way, please, for Allan Ingram, composer of the much-praised Fu Manchu music, and connected with such hits as "What are we going to do with Baby" and "One Night in Napoli."

DR. FU MANCHU IS ON THE AIR!

WARNING! Dr. Fu Manchu, arch-demon of the Orient, is slinking through the shadows of the underworld. Nayland Smith, celebrated international detective, has sworn to destroy him. Mystery... Torture... Death.... LISTEN!

A thrilling new episode in the adventures of Sax Rohmer's famous character will be presented every Wednesday at 4.45 p.m. and Sunday at 7 p.m.

RADIO LUXEMBOURG

Presented by
the makers of "MILK OF MAGNESIA"—the perfect antacid

VOICE OF FU MANCHU

Luxembourg, Sundays, 7 p.m.

THE adventures of Dr. **Fu** Manchu not only bring excitement and thrills, but they are so **convincingly "real"** and create a sinister, **Oriental** atmosphere.

There are many **reasons why Frank Cochrane** is best suited to play the part of Dr. Fu Manchu. In the **first** place **he** has lived for many **years** in China and has **been able** to study their habits and mental make-up. He **has also played** innumerable **Chinese roles on** the stage.

His performances in Dr. Fu Manchu **reveal his complete mastery** of **the Chinaman's methods of reasoning,** but his **greatest asset is his voice.**

Frank Cochrane himself **thoroughly enjoys taking** this part.

"Fu Manchu," be says, "has a **definite personality, and** a definite purpose. **He** is a **keen wit** and **possesses** a quick Oriental **brain. He** is a **demon for power and** wants to **mould** the **world** to **his** way of direction and **thinking.**

"The adventures of **Dr. Fu Manchu** am full of unlikely **happenings** which have **been** so well treated that they **convince** the listener **as** being highly **probable.**

"Before settling down to listen, I suggest **you turn** out the **lights** in the room the moment you hear the gong, and take **your** mind into serious **channels.** This will help you enormously to catch the **illusion.**

"There is **only** one **female role** in Dr. Fu Manchu. This is the part of the **heroine.** The girl who **takes** this character, **Karamanch,** is **Rani Waller.** She's **brilliant!**

"There is a good cast in **these programmes.** D. A. **Clarke** Smith. **Mervyn** Johns. Arthur **Young,** are all **exceptionally** good actors, and **with** Ram in thr only female role who, **as** I **have** said, is excellent, it is a well-balanced cast.

If you have not **already heard** the adventures of Dr. **Fu** Manchu. switch on to Luxembourg **next** Sunday. **Each adventure** is complete in **itself.**

(Presented by **Milk** of **Magnesia.**)

The material on this page and the preceding two is from *Radio Pictorial* (London). "Fu Manchu Speaks" is from the 13 August 1937 issue; "Voice of Fu Manchu" is from the issue dated 19 February 1937. The material was located, and copies supplied, by W. O. G. Lofts.

The photograph of Sax Rohmer on page 11 is from the London *Daily Mirror;* copy supplied by Brian Hughes.

[continued from page 10]

and, in fact, all their material was recorded. There were no 'live' broadcasts. I believe Sax said that they did their recording at a disused theatre. The leading light in the operation was Eddie Pola, who also took personal part as an entertainer in some programmes. I think he had a brother who was also concerned in the affair.

"There was actually a plan to follow up the fifty-two Fu Manchu broadcasts with a series adapted from THE QUEST OF THE SACRED SLIPPER. I distinctly remember writing the first two episodes of this. But just at that time the B.B.C. exerted legal pressure to close down the rival operation, and so it came to nothing. Neither Sax nor I ever felt very friendly towards the B.B.C."

Frank Cochrane, the radio Fu Manchu, was born in Durham, England, on 28 October 1872, and died in 1962 at the age of 89. He was a distinguished stage actor, famous for his portrayal of Chinese characters. He won acclaim for the part of "The Cobbler" in the long-running *Chu-Chin-Chow.* He' also appeared in such films as *Bulldog Drummond* and Queer Cargo.

Nayland Smith was portrayed by D. A. Clarke-Smith (1888-1959), another well-known stage and film actor, who had also appeared in Rohmer's stage plays *The* Eye of Siva and *Secret Egypt.* [See TRR #6, page 9; TRR #7, inside front cover and page 12.1

Four actors handled the part of Dr. Petrie: Jack Lambert in episodes 1 through 9, John Rae in #10 through #24, Gordon McLeod in #27 through #43, and Cameron Hall in #44 through #52. (Petrie did not appear in episodes 25 and 26.) Kâramanèh was portrayed initially by Pamela Titheradge and later by Rani Waller. Other actors in the cast included Arthur Young, Mervyn Johns (father of actress Glynis Johns), and Vernon Kelso.

As was common in radio drama, the actors often took several parts in the same program, and sometimes switched roles. For example, in episode 43, Arthur Young portrayed Dr. Fu Manchu, Inspector Weymouth, and Sir Frank Narcombe, while Vernon Kelso took on three other parts.

With the completion of the Fu Manchu series, Frank Cochrane and D. A. Clarke-Smith were rated such a successful team that they were featured in another long series of radio plays, this time concerning Inspector Brooks of Scotland Yard. The Inspector was played by Clarke-Smith, while Frank Cochrane played---surely to no one's surprise---the Chinese villain, La Sante.

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The Radio Luxembourg DR. FU MANCHU Series

1.	The Painted Kiss	6 Dec 1936
2.	The Clue of the Pigtail	1 3 Dec
3.	The Mystery of the Red Moat	20 Dec
4.	The Green Mist	27 Dec
5.	The Call of Siva	3 Jan 1937

6.	The Hulk on the Flats	10 Jan 1937
7.	The Brain Thief	17 Jan
a.	Aaron's Rod	24 Jan
9.	The Living Dead	31 Jan
10.	The Fungi Cellars	7 Feb
11.	The Lord of Fires	14 Feb
12.	The Wire Jacket	21 Feb
13.	The Cry of the Nighthawk	28 Feb
14.	The White Peacock	7 Mar
15.	The Coughing Horror	14 Mar
16.	The Capture of **Kâramanèh**	21 Mar
17.	The Silver Buddha	28 Mar
18.	The Terror Tower	4 Apr
19.	The Fiery Hand	11 Apr
20.	The Return of Aziz	18 Apr
21.	The Six Gates	25 Apr
22.	The Mummy	2 May
23.	The Brass Box	9 May
24.	The Flower of Silence	16 May
25.	The Golden Pomegranates	23 May
26.	The Adventure of the Queen of Hearts	30 May
27.	The Xagazig Mystery	6 Jun
28.	The House of Hashish	13 Jun
29.	The Lilies of Death	20 Jun
30.	Lady of the Si-Fan	27 Jun
31.	The House of the Wild Cat	4 Jly
32.	The Lion Crypt	11 Jly
33.	The Flying Death	18 Jly
34.	The Shadow Army	25 Jly
35.	Satan's Chapel	1 Aug
36.	The Purple Shadow	8 Aug
37.	The Flying Plague	15 Aug
38.	The House of the Devil Doctor	22 Aug
39.	The Hairless Horror	29 Aug
40.	The Scented Drug	5 Sep
41.	The Devil Doctor's Daughter	12 Sep
42.	The Flower of Eternal Life	19 Sep
43.	The Return of the Monk	26 Sep
44.	The Big Raid	3 Oct
45.	The Arrest of the Devil Doctor	10 Oct
46.	The Secret of the Living Dead	17 Oct
47.	The Sleeping Venus	24 Oct
48.	The Vault of the Living Dead	31 Oct
49.	The House of the Bloodhound	7 Nov
50.	"Man Made Gold"	14 Nov
51.	The Human Incinerator	21 Nov
52.	The Hell Below the Thames	28 Nov

SAX ROHMER IN DUTCH

Over a period of almost forty years, some 43 books by Sax Rohmer appeared in Dutch translations. The list presented here was compiled by Jan P. Ruiter of Utrecht, The Netherlands. Mr. Ruiter comments:

"There appears to be only one reliable source for [information of this type]: the library of the Nederlandse Vereniging Ter Bevordering van de Belangen des Boekhandels. Roughly translated: Dutch Society for the Furthering of the Interests of the Bookseller. At least they're open about it. The library is in Amsterdam, Nieuwe Prinsengracht 55. So I went to Amsterdam, swallowed dust for a few hours, and this is what I found.

"I worked through reference materials from 1910 until January 1972 inclusive. To my surprise, there have been no reprints or cheap paperback editions. Since 1961 nothing at all has been published. The gap of ten years between 1939 and 1949 is of course explainable if you remind yourself that we were occupied then, and that the Germans did not particularly like this degenerate American literature. After the war the acute paper shortage accounts for the delay in starting up business again. But still, it is strange that there is nothing after 1961."

In the following list, titles are arranged in chronological order according to year of publication of the Dutch edition. The 43 books were the products of seven publishers, who are identified by the following abbreviations:

AGS	A. G. Schoonderbeek: Laren
AL	Allert de Lange: Amsterdam
AWBZ	A. W. Bruna & Zoon: Utrecht
DC	De Combinatie: Rotterdam
DS	De Steenuil: Hoorn
JvK	Jacob van Kampen: Amsterdam
M	Meulenhoff: Amsterdam

Translators (tr) are identified by their full names, where known.

1922 Het Geheim van dr. Fu-Mancha [sic] [?The Insidious Dr. . . .]
pub: M tr: W. J. A. Roldanus jr.

1925 De opiumkoning [The Opium King = Dope]
Pub: AL tr: G. Keller

1926 Het helsche laboratorium van dr. Fu Manchu [The Devil Doctor]
pub: M tr: W. J. A. Roldanus jr.

Gele Schaduwen [Yellow Shadows]
pub: AL tr: C. C. Bender

1927 *De gouden schorpioen* [The Golden Scorpion]
pub: AL tr: C. C. Bender

De geheime opiumclub [The Secret Opium-Club = The Yellow Claw]
pub: M tr: W. J. A. Roldanus jr.

1928 *De wreker* [The Avenger = The Sins of Séverac Bablon]
pub: DC tr: J. G. H. van den Bovenkamp Sr.

Het doodenmasker [The Death-Mask = Grey Face]
pub: AL tr: C. C. Bender

Vampiervleugel [Vampire Wing = Bat Wing]
pub: JvK tr: not identified

1929 *De vlammende scimitar* [The Flaming Scimitar = The Quest of the Sacred Slipper]
pub: DC tr: J. G. H. van den Bovenkamp Sr.

Het dal der tranen [The Valley of Tears = The Orchard of Tears]
pub: DC tr: Hera

1930 *Het* huis der *schaduwen* [The House of Shadows = The Daughter of Huang Chow]
pub: DC tr: J. G. H. van den Bovenkamp jr.

Het Mysterie der groene *oogen* [The Mystery of the Green Eyes = The Green Eyes of Bâst]
pub: DC tr: J. G. H. van den Bovenkamp jr.

Het Mysterie van Low Fennell [= The Haunting of Low Fennell]
pub: DC tr: J. G. H. van den Bovenkamp jr.

De gele duivel [The Yellow Devil = The Hand of Fu-Manchu]
pub: DC tr: J. van der Kamp

De gouden boeddha [The Golden Buddha = Kerry's Kid]
pub: DC tr: J. G. H. van den Bovenkamp jr.

1931 *De laatste dag der wereld* [The Last Day of the World = The Day the World Ended]
pub: DC tr: M. Klein

De Onderwereld van New York [The Underworld of New York = The Emperor of America]
pub: AL tr: A. D. Hildebrand

De wraak van. Dr. Fu Manchu [The Revenge of Dr. Fu Manchu = Daughter of Fu Manchu]
pub: DC tr: John Walker

1932 *Vuurtong* [Fire-Tongue]
pub: DC tr: Williams

Yu'an Hee See lacht [Yu'an Hee See Laughs]
pub: DC tr: Karel Jordaens

1933 *Het masker van Fu Manchu* [The Mask of Fu Manchu]
pub: DC tr: H. J. Kok

De droom-detective [The Dream Detective]
pub: AL tr: C. C. Bender

De sluwe Dr. Fu Manchu [The Sly Dr. Fu Manchu = The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu]
pub: AL tr: C. C. Bender

Geheimen uit Egypte [Secrets from Egypt = Tales of Secret Egypt]
pub: DS tr: C. C. Bender

Het geheim van Adolf Zara [The Secret of Adolf Zara = Moon of Madness]
pub: DC tr: H. J. Kok

1934 *De Avonturen van kapitein o'Hagan* [The Adventures of Captain O'Hagan = The Exploits of Capt. O'Hagan]
pub: AL tr: A. M. Buis

De Bruid van Dr. Fu Manchu [The Bride of Fu Manchu]
pub: DC tr: H. J. Kok

1935 *Het spoor van Fu Manchu* [The Trail of Fu Manchu]
pub: DC tr: not identified

1936 *De wraak der goden* [The Revenge of the Gods = The Bat Flies LOW]
pub: AWBZ tr: not identified

President Fu Manchu
pub: DC tr: H. J. Kok

1938 *Het cocaine-syndicaat* [The Cocaine Syndicate = White Velvet]
pub: AGS tr: Th. M. P. Klaus

1939 De trommen van Fu Manchu [The Drums of Fu Manchu]
pub: DC tr: J. G. H. van den Bovenkamp jr.

1949 *De Schaduw van Dr. Fu Manchu* [Shadow of Fu Manchu]
pub: DC tr: not identified

1950 *De zeven zonden* **[Seven Sins]**
pub: DS tr: D. Uyt den Boogaard

Mysterie rond Lady Hillary [Mystery over Lady Hillary = Hangover House]
pub: DC tr: B. van der Tempel

1952 *De geheimzinnige Swnuru* [The Mysterious Sumuru = Sins of Sumuru]
pub: DC tr: B. van der Horst

1953 *Slaven* van *Sumuru* [Slaves of Sumuru]
pub: DC tr: **K. Brouwer**

1954 *De Vuurgodin* **[The Fire Goddess]**
pub-. DC **tr:** Nel Bakker

1955 *Sumuru Keert Terug* [Sumuru Returns = The Return of Sumuru]
pub: DC tr: C. de Graaff

1957 *Fatale madonna* [Fatal Madonna = Sinister Madonna]
pub: DC tr: C. de Graaff

1958 *De macht van Fu Manchu* **[The Power of Fu Manchu = Re-Enter** Fu Manchu]
pub: DC tr: C. de Graaff

1961 *Keizer Fu Manchu* [Emperor **Fu** Manchul
pub: DC tr: M. Zwiers

Two of the volumes listed above, *Het huis der schaduwen* (1930) and *De gouden boeddha* (1930), obviously constitute an edition of *Tales of Chinatown,* but the distribution of stories between the two volumes can only be conjectured.

Not included in the above list are translations of serials and short stories for such periodicals as *Katholieke Illustratie*; information on these is too fragmentary. **For** the same reason, Sax Rohmer stories in Dutch anthologies have not been listed. **Any** information in these categories is more than welcome.

NEXT ISSUE: Sax Rohmer in French.

THE SEALS OF THE SI FAN

by Cay Van Ash

Seals drawn by Kiku Onaka

Try as one may, perfection is rarely to be achieved. As Confucius himself said, "A man may not become perfect in a thousand years," and the sad fact must be admitted that Tom Stacey Ltd.'s handsomely turned-out volume THE WRATH OF FU MANCHU---a valuable addition to every collection of Sax Rohmer's works---is marred by a single error. I refer to the Seals of the Si Fan, and of Dr. Fu Manchu.

The publishers were, I suppose, hardly to be blamed for this, as they had only the text to work from and evidently at the time of printing no additional information was available to them. Consequently, acting simply on the statement of Sir Denis Nayland Smith that the Si Fan seal signified "the higher", they obtained the simple Chinese character for "above" and---most unfortunately---reproduced it upside down! [*The Wrath of Fu Manchu*, pp. 22, 51] Moreover, being totally at a loss for the personal seal of Dr. Fu Manchu, they made do with the device which readers of *The Rohmer Review* will no doubt immediately recognize as the personal seal of Sax Rohmer himself. [ibid., p. 231

Having ready access to more authentic particulars, I hasten to supply them.

In common with all such organizations, the Si Fan uses two seals. The Great Seal, shown above, is the one to be used on such items as headed stationery. It is a very ancient and elaborate version of the character for "high". There is no comparative in Chinese; in context, the character could be translated as "higher". This is the embossed mark which would appear on the infamous warning notices usually signed "President of the Council".

A complex seal of this nature is also frequently used in the Far East for certifying the authenticated copy of a document. Copy and original are laid one on top of the other, with edges overlapping, and the seal applied so that half of the impression appears on each. Both documents can then later be verified by bringing them together. The same system is useful for providing secret agents or messengers with a means of identification.

The second, or Lesser, Seal (shown overleaf) is used for more

commonplace purposes. The Si Fan is presumed to derive its name from the fact that the Society had its origin in the neighborhood of Si Fan---which, in a more modern transcription of Chinese, is now generally written as Shih Fang. The Lesser Seal consists simply of these two characters, in an archaic style. It would be used for marking Si Fan property, either in the form of an ink stamp or a brand suitable for use on such objects as wooden boxes, dagger handles, or the persons of traitors.

This, and not the Great Seal, was the sign which Fu Manchu, in his wrath, placed on his daughter's shoulder. Wrathful as he was, however, the doctor's customary gentility remained apparent. The brand would more normally be placed on the buttocks.

Dr. Fu Manchu's personal seal, shown at right, is actually the least imposing of the three, being, as in all such cases , merely the first of the three characters which form his name. (I have already noted these in *The Rohmer Review* #9, p. 15.) Here the character "Fu" is more plainly and simply drawn, since it is not brush-written but cut on a small stamp of the woodblock type. The ink used for such personal seals and Lesser Seals is customarily vermilion.

Readers are urgently advised to have nothing to do with anything bearing any of these signs... .

[continued from Inside Back Cover]

bit ahead of their time. For example, I often refer to *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) as *The (Fu) Manchu Candidate.* Less than a week before I saw Frankenheimer's film I had found a copy of Rohmer's PRESIDENT FU MANCHU, and the parallels between the two were very easy to spot. I've always wondered if Condon or Frankenheimer were familiar with Rohmer's work.

Perhaps Mrs. Rohmer's article "A Sixth Sense" explains her husband's prophetic ability. In case you had not noticed it, chapter XXIII of PRESIDENT FU MANCHU is entitled "Fu Manchu's Water-Gate", and the content of said chapter is an attempt by government agents at a break-in. This, in the one Fu Manchu novel about American political skulduggery... .

TRR's readers might be interested in some recent books by Philip Jose Farmer: *Tarzan Alive, The Book of Philip Jose Farmer,* and *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life.* In the course of developing fictional biographies of Tarzan, Doc Savage, and other characters from popular fiction, Farmer suggests that Nayland Smith is the nephew of a man named Holmes and the cousin of Lord Greystoke. He constructs an elaborate family tree which includes the Shadow, Nero Wolfe, Raffles, and even Leopold Bloom of *Ulysses.*

Letters

From ELIZABETH SAX ROHMER, Sussex, England:

[Regarding "Rewritten Stories", TRR #9, page 13:] I never approved of this habit of Sax's. I called it pinching his own plots---but sometimes he was really very lazy about new ones. On the other hand he was clever in making short story plots into book length ones. I used to get many short story plots for Sax, and it amazed me that he could get books out of them. SEVEN SINS was one of these. You will remember that the story changes character, from a strange mystic atmosphere to an ordinary sort of thriller.

I've always thought I got all my strange plots from Sax while he was sleeping. That's when I was awake, through the early hours of the morning when he fell into bed dead tired---it always woke me and I couldn't sleep again, so I used to get up and write---not in detail, but a whole plot for a weird story. I'm sure I got these plots from him, because I haven't had this experience since he died.

[Regarding "Here and There", this issue, page 1:] The bit about telepathy I can vouch for. I could practically tell Sax what to say in the witness box when we had our big law case in New York ---so much so that I was asked by the lawyer defending his client to leave the court whilst he was questioning Sax: "I must ask Mrs. Sax Rohmer to leave the room---she is mentally very busy!" The funny side of this ability is that you sense what the other fellow is up to all the time. Poor Sax! He had to give up the girl-chasing. He said, "It's no good, you'll always know." Often I didn't know, but pretended I did, and he gave the whole thing away.

From EDWARD GRAY PARROT II, Hancock, Maine:

Issue #10 was the best yet. John Carroll's article on the dragon motif was most interesting. While the dragon was always a part of Chinese culture, it was only one of a host of colorful deities. Its importance as *the* central figure in Chinese society is largely due to the Western impressions gained from Chinatown parades, etc. It really was not the central figure in their mythos, although it was the symbol of the Manchu emperors.

From PERCELLE CORYELL, Treasure Island, Florida:

I must agree with you that the Postal Service gobbled up my TRR subscription renewal. The eating habits of said Service are more voracious than I had realized: I find that not only my TRR subscription slipped into the great void, but also a check that I sent to Tom Stacey Ltd. for MASTER OF VILLAINY and some other

Rohmer books. If I should encounter a postal employee here who possesses a high Satanic forehead and slanted green eyes, you may not receive this letter either... .

From CHARLES C. DAY, Yorkshire, England:

I am sure that Sax Rohmer would be more than delighted if he could know of the continuing interest in his work. My preoccupation with Rohmer began with the two silent picture serials, The *Mystery of Dr. Fu-Manchu* and *The Further Mysteries of Dr. Fu-Manchu* in 1923-24. My sister was a professional pianist in a pit orchestra, and I used to be allowed into the theatre gratis twice a week. Many actors have portrayed Fu Manchu, but the one who came closest in appearance to Sax Rohmer's description of the Devil Doctor was Harry Agar Lyons, who appeared in the serials.

In "The Blue Scorpion" by Robert Weinberg, the author says, "It is not for Nayland Smith that we remember the Fu Manchu stories ...." Well, for my part, Smith, Petrie, Inspector Weymouth, Kâra-manèh, Zarmi, and others, stand out very vividly, and I cannot think of Fu Manchu without automatically recalling all these other personalities.

From R. ROSENBLATT, Madison, Wisconsin:

Have any of your readers ever suggested the possibility that the reason for Sherlock Holmes's mystery-shrouded visit to Lhasa, disguised as a Norwegian named Sigerson, was precisely for the purpose of investigating the activities of a certain Oriental doctor? In DAUGHTER OF FU MANCHU two Tibetan monks are present at the meeting of the Si Fan summoned by Fah Lo Suee, and Nayland Smith and his young assistant overpower them and use their robes as disguises. May not Holmes have been investigating some aspect of the link between Fu Manchu and the lamas of Tibet? It may be recalled that not long after Holmes's trip to Tibet the British, under Younghusband, invaded Tibet and took Lhasa (as described in BAYONETS TO LHASA by Peter Fleming, older brother of Ian Fleming). Perhaps this invasion in 1912 was sparked by Holmes's reports of Fu Manchu's activities there.

From CHRIS STEINBRUNNER, New York City:

The recent popularity of the kung fu/karate films from China has caused The *Castle* of *Fu Manchu* finally to surface in New York. It is the seediest of all the Christopher Lee Manchu films, another go-around for the more interesting plot elements of all the previous films, stabbed at rather tiredly. The best addition is the gangster's moll running about through most of the film in mannish clothes (but fetchingly). But where is Maria Rohm, Harry Alan Towers's friend, who had been in most of the other films in the

series?

What amused me most was the castle of the film's title, identified as the "Anatolian Castle" in Istanbul. I was in Istanbul last year, and I recognized the ferries and streets in the movie. But the castle which Fu Manchu conquers and uses as a stronghold is a Turkish national monument and museum. 'This is analogous to his overthrowing and occupying The Cloisters in Fort Tryon park in New York City, or the Tower of London.

But then again, maybe Fu Manchu could do that!

[The review at right is from Cue magazine, 2 Jun 1973, and was sent by Andrew Jay Peck.]

THE CASTLE OF FU MANCHU—(Maron) At the Neighborhoods. This sluggish silliness sits at the bottom of a double bill with a "kung fu" film, which gives some indication of how dreadful it is. Fu Manchu and his daughter are out to control the world by wreaking havoc with the waterways, like the Suez and Panama Canals. They have a scientific secret which can turn water into ice, and they demonstrate their power by creating an iceberg in the Caribbean and destroying a passenger ship. The British government is understandably frightened. If the plot alone isn't enough to keep one home, the performances and dialogue should. Occidental Christopher Lee plays the title role with a Fu Manchu moustache, The company is asked to deliver lines like "The world must decide in two weeks: obedience or obliteration." As far as this film goes, here's one vote for obliteration.

—D.J.M.

From DOUGLAS A. ROSSMAN, Baton Rouge, Louisiana:

On plate CLXXXIV of the J.-B. Rictstap ARMORIAL GÈNÈRAL ILLUSTRÉ by Victor and Hcnri Rolland (Sauvegarde Historique, Lyon, France, no date given) there is a coat of arms---Gules, crossed daggers Or--- with the caption:

Römer

Saxe

This refers, of course, to the Römer family of Saxony, but the resemblance to Sax Rohmer's name is striking, is it not?

I'll be making a brief expedition to Mexico later this month [May 19731. We hope to bring back containers filled to the brim with unspeakable horrors---snakes, centipedes, spiders, and scorpions. Only by studying his instruments of terror can we ever hope to thwart the evil machinations of the Devil Doctor!

From VINCE MIRANDA, West palm Beach, Florida:

I found of special interest the piece called "The Politics of Fu Manchu" [TRR #10]. I've been in a thousand arguments relating to the Doctor's altering goals. To me they were one of the high points of the series: the Devil Doctor shifted his objectives to meet the changing circumstances of the world around him. This gave him an added dimension sadly lacking in the characters of other writers.

The above may be the primary reason why Rohmer's works have appealed to me. His characters managed to grow throughout the series. Not to mention that his plots may, in some cases, have been quite a

[continued on page 22]

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